



Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



NOAA Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

Recognizing the importance of the Great Lakes to our nation, President Obama made their restoration a national priority. The resulting Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is the largest investment in the Great Lakes in two decades. The GLRI Action Plan identifies five issues requiring urgent action: Toxics and Areas of Concern; Invasive Species; Nearshore Health and Nonpoint Source Pollution; Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration; and Monitoring, Communication, and Partnerships. A task force of 16 federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has been charged with implementing initiatives to address these focus areas over a five-year period (FY 2010 – 2014).



Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration

The health of the Great Lakes depends on the health of the entire ecosystem: the Great Lakes themselves, plus coastline, wetlands, rivers, watersheds, and the flora and fauna that call these places home. Many opportunities exist to protect and restore critical ecosystem elements even as we strive to improve our understanding of emerging issues and their impacts. Toward this end, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has made habitat and wildlife protection one of its five priorities.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)

To contribute to the GLRI's Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration Focus Area, NOAA is helping protect coastal lands that enjoy exceptional ecological, historical, and recreational value but are threatened with degradation. GLRI funds have helped NOAA support its Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), which permanently protects these habitats from development and contamination. Competitive CELCP grants provide state and local governments with matching funds to purchase significant coastal and estuarine lands, or conservation easements on such lands, from willing sellers. Lands or conservation easements acquired through CELCP are protected in perpetuity so that they may be enjoyed by future generations.

GLRI: Bolstering CELCP

CELCP has had a profound impact on protection of vital landscapes. Since 2002, over 75,000 acres of coastal habitat across the United States have been conserved, including more than 7,500 acres of Great Lakes coastal habitat. Examples of CELCP projects include the Lake Erie Bluff Preservation project, conserving more than 200 acres and 5,900 feet of Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline that provide habitat for state-listed plant species and migratory birds, as well as Frog Bay Tribal National Park, one of the few tribal national parks in the nation, located along the southern shores of Lake Superior. The GLRI has significantly enhanced CELCP's ability to protect these Great Lakes coastal and estuarine habitats.

CELCP Highlight

Bete Grise Wetlands: A Lake Superior Gem

The Bete Grise wetland complex, located on Lake Superior's Keweenaw Peninsula, has been identified by the Nature Conservancy and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as one of the highest quality dune swale wetland systems remaining in the Upper Great Lakes. This wetland landscape is home to



CELCP projects FY 2010 – 2012

In **FY 2010**, CELCP was awarded \$5,000,000 through GLRI. This funding supported a competitive grants process that protected coastal habitat in five areas in the Great Lakes:

- *Bete Grise Wetlands, Michigan*
- *Houghton Falls, Wisconsin*
- *Kelleys Island Preserve, Ohio*
- *Mashek Creek, Wisconsin*
- *Lake Erie Bluff Preservation Project (Part I), Ohio*

In **FY 2011**, CELCP was awarded \$1,000,000 through GLRI. Funding supported three projects:

- *Frog Bay Tribal National Park, Wisconsin*
- *Lost Creek Watershed, Wisconsin*
- *Lake Erie Bluff Preservation Project (Part II), Ohio*

In **FY 2012**, CELCP was awarded \$2,155,000. Funding supported:

- *Lake Erie Bluff Preservation Project (Phase III), Ohio*



Bete Grise Preserve. Photo by Gina Nicholas.

diverse flora and fauna, including eagles and threatened and endangered plants, and it provides important nesting habitat for migratory waterfowl and neotropical song birds.

A decade ago, a portion of the Bete Grise wetland complex was sought for an upscale residential development, which would have destroyed vital wetlands. Project partners worked together to obtain grant funding to create the 1881 acre Bete Grise Preserve, and set a long-term goal to preserve and manage all 8,000+ acres of this outstanding coastal wetland habitat.

Enter CELCP. With the support of FY10 GLRI funds, CELCP contributed funds to protect an additional 1,493 acres of Bete Grise wetlands adjacent to the existing Preserve, including approximately 3,500 feet of shore frontage on Lac La Belle. These Bete Grise wetlands are now permanently protected in their natural state and open to the public year round for non-invasive outdoor recreation, education, and scientific research. Project partners include the Houghton Keewawaw Conservation District, and Michigan Coastal Management Program.

Contact information

For additional information on NOAA's CELCP Program:

Elizabeth Mountz, Coastal Management Specialist
NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
elizabeth.mountz@noaa.gov (301) 563-1148

For additional information on NOAA's GLRI work:

Rebecca Held, NOAA GLRI Program Coordinator
Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory
rebecca.held@noaa.gov (734) 741-2339